

Iranian Surveillance of US Persons and Facilities in 1995

Several instances of probable or suspected Iranian surveillance of US persons and facilities abroad were reported during 1995; many occurred after the announcement of the US economic embargo on Iran in late April. These incidents involved brazen techniques, especially the frequent use of easily traced diplomatic vehicles. The surveillance probably was a matter of intimidation rather than planning for terrorist attacks, but the information collected could facilitate future planning for terrorist operations.

Numerous incidents of probable Iranian-sponsored surveillance of US persons and facilities overseas were reported during 1995. Much of this activity occurred in the wake of the announcement of the US trade embargo on Iran in late April. Much of it was observed in eastern Europe—particularly Zagreb—but its scope has been virtually worldwide.

This surveillance is occurring at a time when Tehran is especially wary of US policy toward Iran. Several US statements and actions over the past 18 months have been perceived by Tehran as elements of a deliberate US plan to undermine the Iranian leadership or justify a US military strike. These include:

- The US military buildup in the Persian Gulf in October 1994, which was intended to counter Iraqi moves but was misinterpreted by Tehran as a signal of US opposition to Iran's stance on the disputed islands of Abu Musa, and Greater and Lesser Tunb.
- Public statements by the Speaker of the US House of Representatives in February 1995 that US policy should aim at overthrowing the Iranian Government, together with the introduction of legislation in the Senate to tighten sanctions on Iran.

- Washington's cancellation of Conoco's contract with Iran in March.

- The announcement in May of plans to base the US 5th Fleet in Bahrain, an act that was publicly condemned by Iran's Supreme Council for National Security.

- Press reports that the US Congress had allocated \$20 million for covert action against Iran.

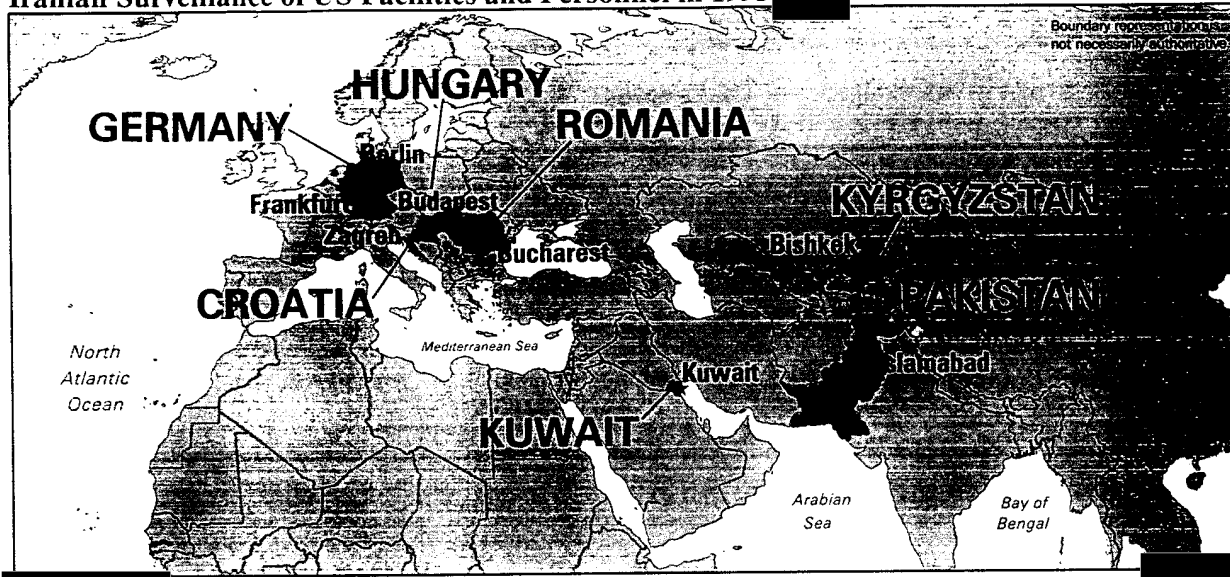
The Incidents

Each of the examples of apparent surveillance during 1995 involved Iran or Iranians in some way.¹ Numerous other incidents have been reported that we suspect are part of the same pattern, but they lack definitive links to Iran:

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

¹ Such incidents continue to be reported in 1996.

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Acting on Instructions From Tehran?

The similar nature of the incidents—as well as the blatant techniques used—suggests that they are part of a coordinated strategy formulated in Tehran.

[REDACTED]

on Iran and to demonstrate Iran's reach. The blatant techniques described above are not characteristic of the careful methods Iran has generally used when planning actual operations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The obvious nature of the surveillance—especially the use of Iranian diplomatic vehicles—suggests that the United States is intended to see it. Tehran may be trying to signal its displeasure with Washington's policy